

DISCOVERIES AT HORSHAM ST. FAITH PRIORY, 1970-1973

by David Sherlock

In 1970 a two-week excavation was undertaken by the writer on behalf of the then Ministry of Public Building and Works in the three rooms of the 'Abbey Farmhouse', which now occupy the western half of the north range of the former cloister of Horsham St. Faith Priory which lies about four miles north of Norwich (TG 216152; Fig. a). It was done prior to the relaying of floors in part of a larger scheme of repairs to the north range carried out with the aid of a grant from the Historic Buildings Council. This is an account of the excavation and the finds together with a description of what was discovered during the restoration of the building. It is prefaced by a brief account of the history of the priory and previous discoveries.

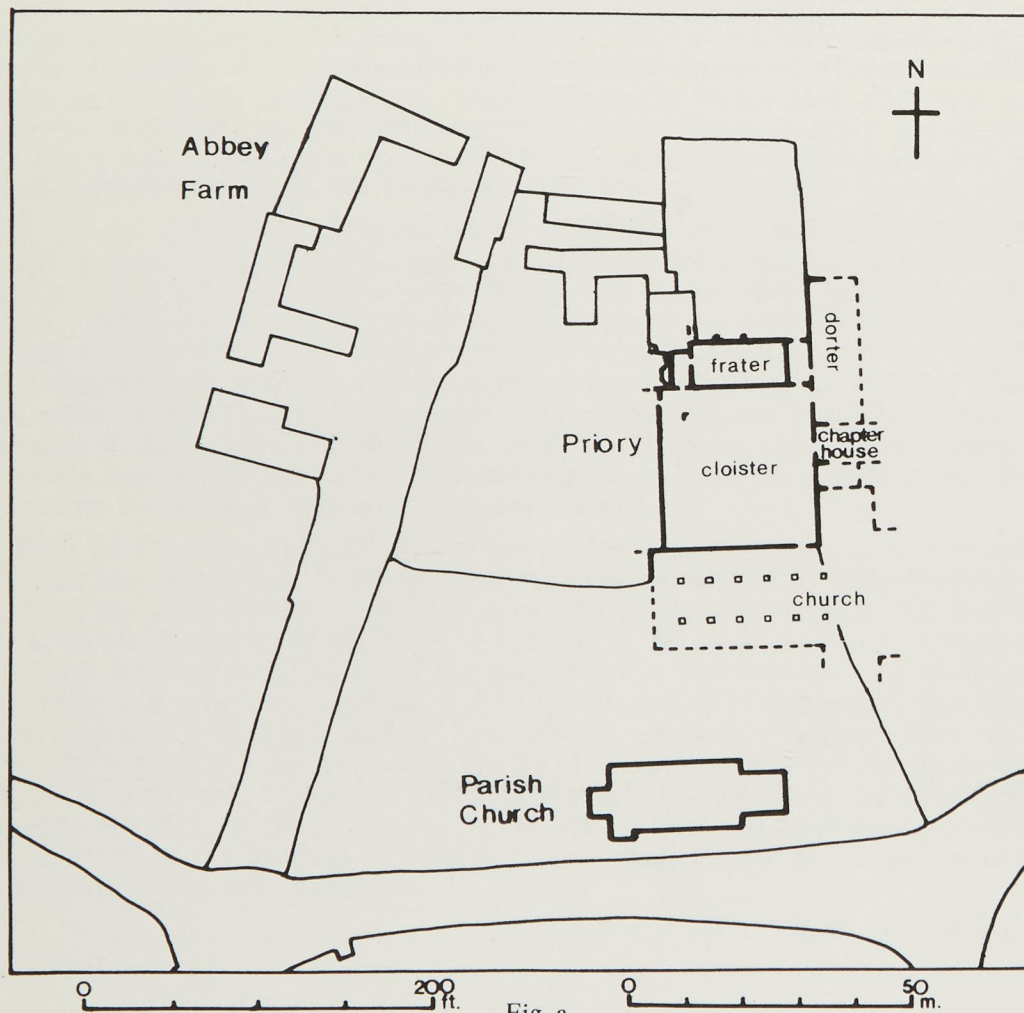


Fig. a.
Horsham St. Faith Priory, Norfolk, based on O.S. 25-inch map, 1880.
Broken lines indicate suggested walls.

HISTORY

The Priory of Horsham, dedicated to St. Faith, Virgin and Martyr, was founded by Robert Fitzwalter, lord of the manor of Horsford, and Sybil his wife in about 1105 in thanksgiving for their miraculous escape from brigands while returning through France from a pilgrimage to Rome. After they had been freed by St. Faith who appeared to them in a vision they rested at the nearby Benedictine abbey of Conques where the saint was enshrined. There they vowed to found on their return to Norfolk a monastery dedicated to God and St. Faith which should be a cell of Conques Abbey.¹ They took back with them two monks who began building the priory at a place called 'kirkscroft' somewhere in the adjacent parish of Horsford but the site was soon abandoned as unsuitable so work was begun at Horsham. The grants of churches, lands and dues which Robert and Sybil made to St. Faith at Conques were confirmed in a charter of Henry I who also permitted the establishment of a three-day fair at Horsham on the feast of St. Faith (6th October). Ties between the priory and the mother house appear to have been maintained and the names of a number of priors appointed before the priory was denized suggest that they came from Conques rather than from Normandy or England.²

The priory was founded for the normal complement of twelve monks and a prior who were to follow the rule of the order of St. Benedict. We know nothing else about the religious life of the priory; nor is there anything to suggest it differed from that of any other small alien priory. Its monastic life certainly included study, since there survives from its library a Latin grammar³ and possibly another book, a collection of works on history and theology bound with an illustrated bestiary.⁴ Both date from the 12th century. It probably also had a copy of the Life of St. Faith, who was a girl martyr of Aquitania about the time of the Emperor Diocletian.⁵

The little that is known of the subsequent history of the priory is un-noteworthy, but the 14th century seems to have been an unfortunate one. In 1307 a commission was appointed to investigate an alleged 'outrage' committed by Robert de Barwe and some 25 others who had forcibly occupied the priory for several months, shutting out the prior, living off the priory's food, collecting its revenues and damaging its property. In 1338 a remittance of £80 of the annual payment of £100, which the king had demanded when the priory was taken into the hands of the Crown, suggests the priory was no longer as prosperous as it was in the preceding century when its revenues had increased with grants from successive lords of Horsford. A few years later, in 1345, payments from farms, tithes etc. were stated to be in arrears. In 1390, the year the priory was denized, a petition by the monks states that the priory was 'almost ruined' and that there were only eight monks instead of twelve. Thereafter, however, affairs may have improved, because the fines and impositions they incurred as an alien priory were abolished. The evidence found for the rebuilding of the frater (c. 1390) would tend to confirm this and it is noteworthy that the prior soon after this time, Geoffrey Langley (1401-1437), was sufficiently important to have had a good memorial brass. The priory acquired two small dependencies, a knight's hospital at Horsham and St. Stephen's Hospital, Norwich.⁶

In 1536, when the priory was dissolved, there were only four monks (all priests), but the Commissioners reported that the church and cloister were in good repair. It was granted to Sir Richard Southwell, the King's receiver for Norfolk (grand-

father of Robert, the Jesuit poet), who converted the buildings into a farmhouse and whose family lived there in the 16th century.⁷ About 1598 it was sold to Sir Henry Hobart, a Lord Chief Justice (builder of the present hall at Blickling). In the 19th century the place was substantially 'Victorianised' by further additions and alterations, especially on the north-west side, which have largely concealed the medieval fabric.

The first recorded antiquarian interest in the priory is in 1846 when the Rev. Octavius Matthias, vicar of Horsford and Horsham 1829-1851, exhibited a floor-tile from the priory at a meeting of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society (see below p. 215). The next vicar but one, the Rev. Josiah Descarrieres Ballance, 1863-1897, carried out research into the priory and visited Conches (Normandy) in 1873 in order to compare the history and architecture of what he supposed were daughter and mother houses. He communicated his findings to M. le Comte de Salvandy who published a paper entitled 'Notice sur Sainte-Foy, à Conches et en Norfolkshire' in *Recueil des Travaux de la Société libre d'Agriculture, Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres du Département de l'Eure*.⁸ Salvandy records that Ballance had discovered the square base of a column of the priory church and suggests that the nave originally had six on each side. He reproduces a drawing of the church as it might have looked in 1536. Ballance's excavations of the site of the church produced ten decorated floor-tiles which are illustrated by Salvandy (Plate H) but the only other small find mentioned is a Nuremburg jetton (maker Hans Krauwinkel). He also recorded the finding, some 30 years earlier in the area of the chapter house, of a stone coffin probably that of a prior, and he included a drawing of the memorial brass of Prior Langley, then in St. Lawrence Church, Norwich.⁹ Salvandy records Ballance's comparison of the architecture of the *Hôtellerie* at Conches with that of the *Ferme* at Horsham and publishes sketches of one side of each. Both sketches clearly show the frater ranges situated on the north side of the cloisters, both similarly converted for post-monastic habitation with upper floors and later windows. The sketch of Conches shows four flying buttresses and two Romanesque doorways, one presumably the frater entrance, the other the entrance to the vaulted passage or slype which is described in Salvandy's account.¹⁰ During his incumbency at Horsham Ballance is known to have collected up pieces of priory stonework from the locality and re-built them into a new Mission Room across the road from the parish church. Inside it he built the three sedilia arches with 13th-century half-dog-tooth mouldings and the arch of a small doorway in the same style though probably re-cut, as almost certainly was the 'Late Norman' arch of the main door.¹¹

After Ballance's time the priory receive occasional visits from archaeological societies but no important discoveries were made until August 1924 when the roof was struck by lightning and set on fire. During repairs wall-paintings were discovered on the east wall of the frater. They were published by E. W. Tristram in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. XXII, and subsequently covered over with canvas on wooden framing. The frater ceased to be occupied in 1958. In 1964 it was open to the elements and vandals. Subsequently the Ministry of Works boarded up the windows and doors to protect it. The Priory was bought by the present occupiers in 1968. Restoration work began in 1970 with the help of the Historic Buildings Council.

DESCRIPTION

The priory was originally built of dark pudding stone with levelling courses of knapped flints and ashlar (probably Caen stone) for jambs of doors etc. These

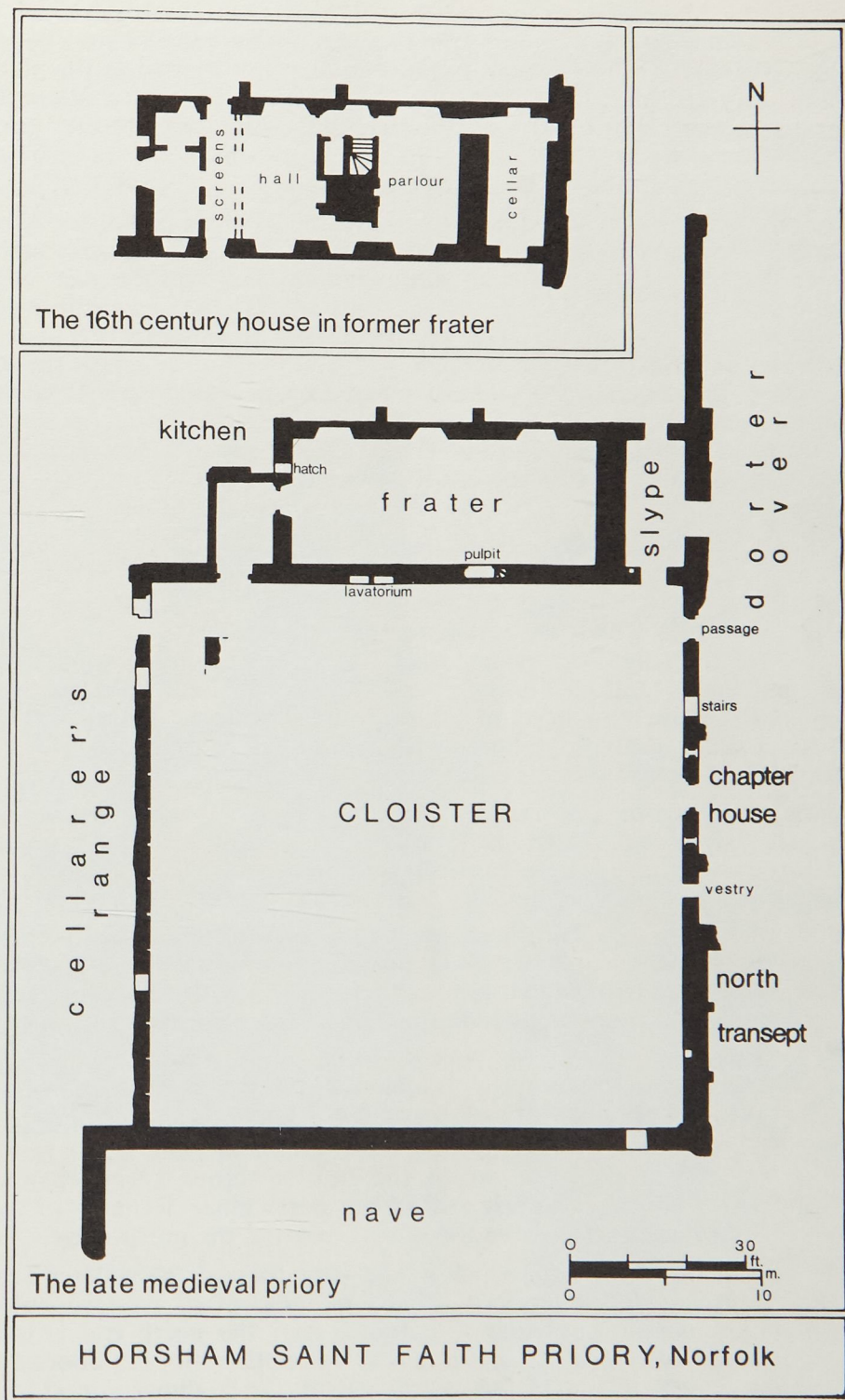


Fig. b.
The conventual buildings and the later house.

alternate courses of pudding stone and flint, which are still visible in much of the four walls which form the cloister, must have been intended to have a decorative effect like that of the alternate grey and brown stone courses in the church at Castle Acre Priory. Many parts have been obscured by repairs and alterations of later periods when a harder oolite stone, Barnack or similar, was used for some buttresses, windows and patches of re-facing. Surprisingly for this part of the country the brickwork practically all appears to date from post-monastic periods.

The priory buildings were laid out around the sides of a cloister about 31 yards square with the church on the south side (Fig. b). The four walls survive up to 12 feet high. The east wall which forms part of the chapter house range was consolidated in 1973. The south and west walls are ivy-clad and await re-consolidation which will undoubtedly reveal further details of openings and abutments. The north wall forms part of the frater range. Nothing is known about the interior of the cloister. A hole dug for a soak-away in 1971 uncovered substantial foundations of flint and mortar near the north-west corner and 9ft 6ins from the west wall. They lay 2ft. below ground surface and were traced a further 2ft. down. They may have formed the foundations for a cloister walk arcade.

As already mentioned, the site of the church which now lies in the north-east corner of the graveyard of the parish church, was partly excavated by Ballance in 1873. Nothing now remains above ground except the north wall of the nave and the west wall of the north transept where they form the angle of the cloister. The returns of these walls which are just visible give measurements of 102ft and 38ft. respectively for the lengths of the nave and north transept. The nave wall is about 3ft thick and has a blocked doorway near the east corner. The transept wall is 4ft thick and is known to have an ashlar plinth just below the present ground level. It has a small niche or cupboard with a pointed arch on the cloister side. At the base of the other side there is evidence for blind arcading in the transept itself.

Immediately north of the transept was a small room, presumably a vestry or possibly just a slype, entered from the cloister by one or other of two small doorways with round arches – there has been some modern re-building here and it is not clear if either doorway is original.

North of these doorways lay the chapter house, measuring internally 20ft. from south to north. The doorway, 5ft. wide, and flanking windows are now blocked. The doorway was of two orders with capitals carved with fine figure sculpture including dragons and strapwork decoration in earlier Romanesque style (Plate B).

North of the chapter house are the jambs of another original entrance also blocked, presumably for the daystairs leading up to the dormitory over this range, and north again is a 14th-century arch for either a slype leading out of the cloister or the warming room beneath the dorter. Reproduced in Plate A is a view taken from near this arch of the east wall of the cloister before it was repaired. The dorter itself partly abutted the east wall of the north range. Remains of the west wall of the dorter range survived for about 18ft. beyond the north range.

The west wall of the cloister which would have formed the cellarer's range is the least well-preserved, having been robbed of most of its western outer skin and architectural detail. The existing entrance near the north end is later but partly overlaps a medieval opening. There may be another blocked doorway some 5ft. to the south of it. However the east face of the walls shows a good length of original build and has putlog holes every 6ft. along it about 3ft. above present ground level.



PLATE A
The East wall of the Cloister. *Photo Hallam Ashley*



PLATE B.1
Capitals in Chapter House doorway. *Photo Hallam Ashley*



PLATE B.2
Capitals in Chapter House doorway. *Photo Hallam Ashley*



PLATE C
The North Range, from the Cloister. *Photo Hallam Ashley*



PLATE D
Horsham St. Faith Priory, the North Range, from the north. *Photo D. Sherlock*



PLATE E

Pulpit and blocked stairway in south wall of Frater. *Photo Hallam Ashley*



PLATE F

Foundations of earlier North wall of Frater. *Photo Jonathan Coad*



PLATE G.1
Remains of tiled floor, scale in feet. *Photo D. Sherlock*

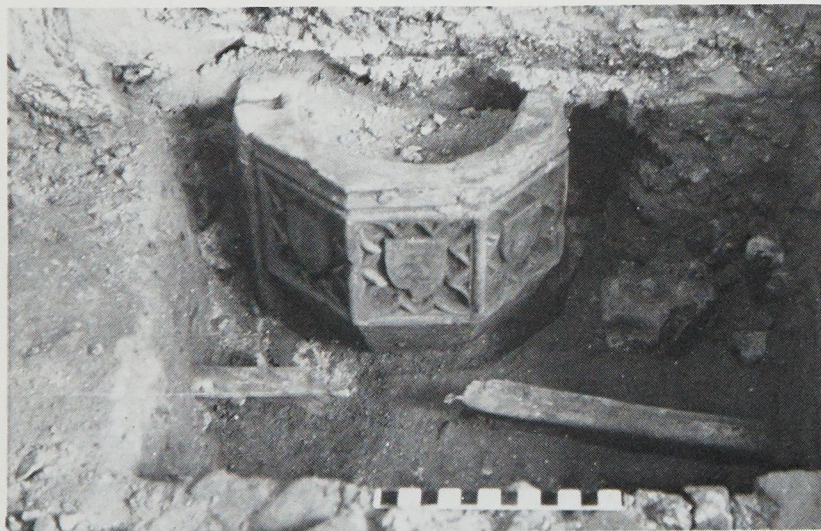


PLATE G.2
Buried water stoup and lead pipe. Foot Scale. *Photo D. Sherlock.*

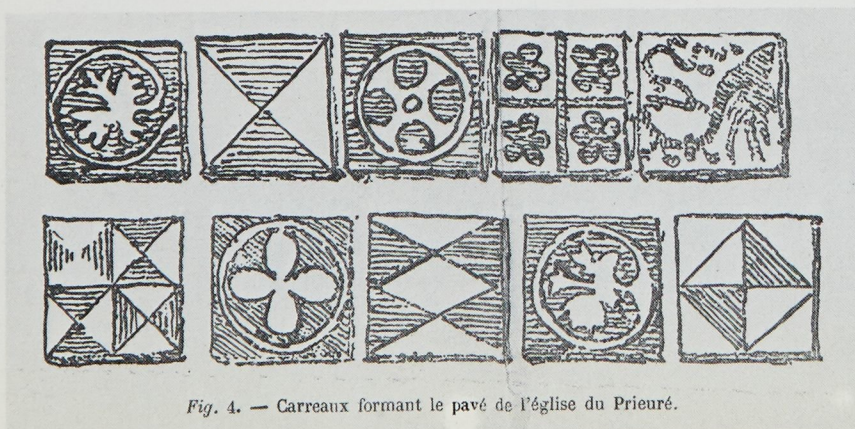


Fig. 4. — Carreaux formant le pavé de l'église du Prieuré.

PLATE H
Floor tiles published by Salvandy, 1873.

The North Range

This is the best preserved range and substantial parts of the monastic frater are to be seen incorporated in the later conversions. Further information about the frater came to light during conservation work and the excavations which are described below.

There were five main building periods from the 12th to the 17th centuries, and a sixth later. It is easiest to describe the range period by period. The dates given are approximate. The ground and first floor plans are given in Fig. c; the south and north elevations are shown in plates C and D.

1. *Foundation Period – 12th Century.* The original range consisted of a frater and a barrel vaulted slype to the east of it. The walls were 3ft. 6ins. thick, of characteristic pudding stone with levelling courses of flint (but, on the east face of the wall abutting the dorter, of large flints with levelling courses of smaller flints). The lower part of the east wall of the frater was 5ft. 3ins. thick to support the thrust of the adjacent barrel vault. Inside, the walls of the frater had painted plaster in the form of rectangles in thin red and blue lines imitative of ashlar with leaf decoration. The slype has remains of a painted arcade. The doorway for the frater^{1 2} and slype can be seen in Plate C. The former has plain cushion capitals, in contrast to those of the chapter house. There was an entrance from the slype to the dorter undercroft. One jamb of a lancet window can be seen beneath the south-west corner of the existing roof. There was another lancet, now between the two south buttresses. These are the only evidence for fenestration in this period. The foundation of the demolished north wall was found (Plate F, Fig.c). The room above the slype was entered through a door from the dorter and was perhaps the prior's bedroom. It has elaborate floral wall paintings (not yet restored).

2. *13th Century.* The pulpit in the south wall of the frater was remodelled (Plate E). Stairs built in the thickness of the wall led up to it. The first step is now 3ft. 2ins. above the floor of the room. If this floor is approximately on the level of the original floor then either there was a dais at that end of the frater, or there were three or four extra steps out from the wall. There was a book cupboard below the pulpit. Buttresses may have been added to the north wall – the foundation of one can be seen in the ground. Otherwise, constructionally this was a minor period for the north range^{1 3} but it probably included the re-decoration of the east wall. The paintings published by Tristram (see above, p. 204) were of a crucifixion scene, about twice life size. He estimated that the cross was at least 16ft. high which would mean that the east wall of the frater rose to about 25ft. internally. The head of Christ was destroyed in the fire of 1924. Either side of SS Mary and John are the figures of a crowned lady, possibly St. Margaret of Scotland, and a man, possibly a king. Beneath them, and running the length of the wall, at eye level, is an inscription and a two-foot high strip of nine scenes (first discovered in 1969) depicting the story of the foundation of the priory. The paintings appear to date from the mid-13th century but have been touched up more than once.^{1 4}

3. *After 1390.* The frater was completely remodelled as a shorter and narrower building. The original west end, the extent of which is not known, was cut off by a new cross wall with a re-used doorway and a large west window above. The jambs of the south doorway were partly re-cut and a lobby built between it and the new entrance to the frater. For details see excavations in Room 1 (below, p. 210).

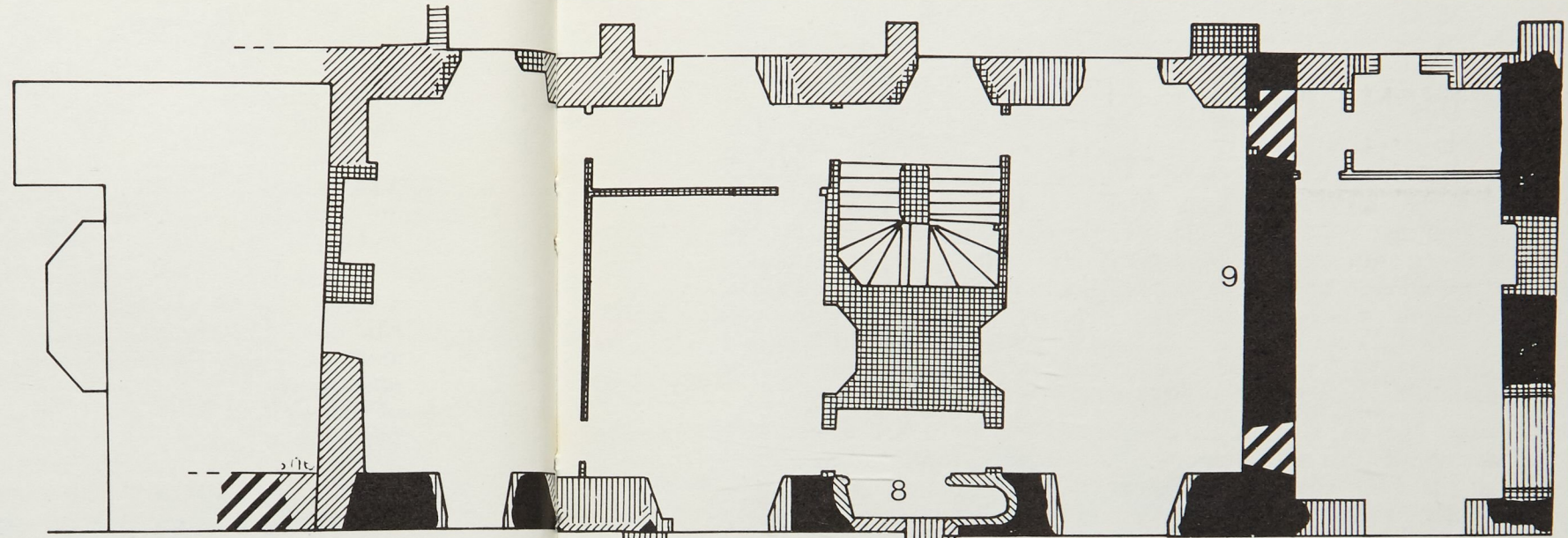
HORSHAM SAINT FAITH PRIORY. NORTH RANGE.

0 6 M.

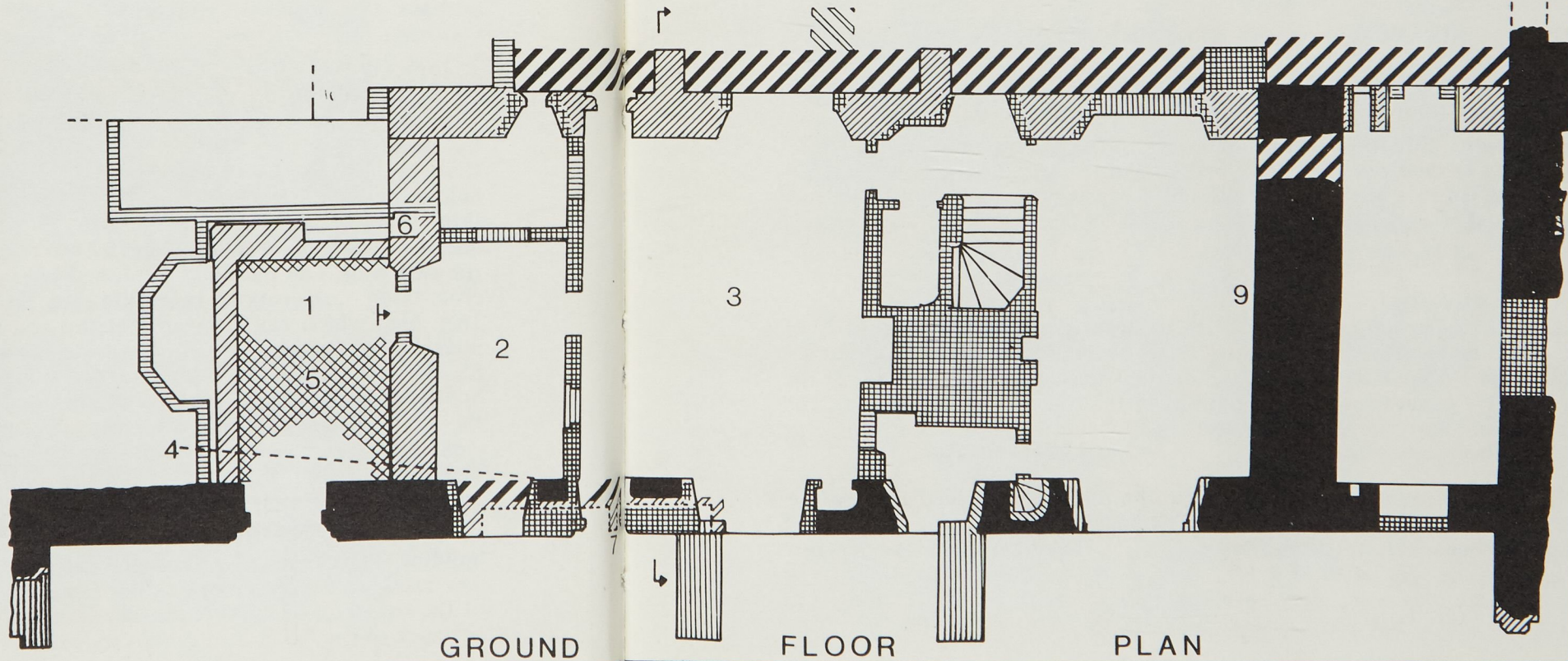
0 20 FT.

- walls foundations or demolished
- 12th century
- 13th century
- c. 1390
- post-dissolution
- 17th century
- later

- ↑ elevation
- ↖ section
- 1-3 rooms excavated
- 4 lead pipe
- 5 tiled floor
- 6 hatch
- 7 lavatorium
- 8 pulpit
- 9 wall paintings



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Fig. c. Plans of North Range

The north wall was rebuilt about 2ft. 6ins. further south, 3ft. thick with square-headed windows and buttresses to give a new pattern of bays.¹⁵ The centre buttress was carved with an escutcheon. The north-west door dates from this period. On the south side a cloister walk was built, blocking the south lancets which were replaced with two-light windows clear of the cloister walk roof. A lavatorium was built within the south wall sheltered by the cloister walk. The recess for the bowl of the lavatorium was 18-20ins. deep, about 12ft. wide and about 2ft. 6ins. above ground level. It was framed by two arches which were partly exposed during restoration when their mouldings were recorded. The construction around the two visible windows on the south side shows small coursed flints with traces of grey rendering and if this was the overall construction of the period it would seem that the east end of the south wall was refaced at the same time. Presumably it was considered best to render over the whole wall because the original alternate coursing had been so much altered that it ceased to look decorative. Inside, a moulded wooden roof cornice, which survives for much of the length of the north and south sides, may belong to this period.

4. *Post-Dissolution.* The cloister was demolished and the south wall made good. The building was converted into a house with a first floor, central chimney and stair, chimney at first-floor level within the period 3 west window, and complete refenestration. A door was inserted where the lavatorium had been. Construction was of brick and re-used ashlar and the building was again rendered. The windows mostly have stone surrounds; one with oak mullions and transoms survives on the north side. The little cusped window to the west of the north door was re-set. First-floor partitions were of close studding and daub. The doorway between the dormer and the room over the slype was converted into a fireplace. Fireplaces show that the attic was occupied.

5. *17th Century.* Much of the east end above first-floor level was rebuilt and the east end north side re-faced. Buttresses were built against the south wall and the windows modified. The roof was renewed. Construction was of flint with dressings and a patterning of stone and red bricks, some of them moulded.

6. *Later Alterations.* Buildings at the north-west corner were altered and added to. The north and west walls of the lobby behind the Norman doorway were demolished and a larger room with brick walls and a bay window was built. The roof was reconstructed after the fire of 1924.

EXCAVATIONS

Excavations were carried out in the three western rooms (Nos. 1-3 on plan) of the frater range where floors were to be relaid in concrete, and small trenches were dug outside Room 1 to look for the original west wall and the level of the cloister walk. The excavation of foundations in the cloister and footings of the period 1 north wall have already been referred to.

Room 1

The principal discoveries in this room were the remains of a tiled floor, north and west walls and a hatch. The floor was composed of a chequer pattern of glazed tiles set diagonally to the walls (Plate G,1). They lay on a bed of white mortar which lay on the earth at a depth of 2ft. below the modern floor level. Although the glaze was worn they survived right across the centre of the room and around the edges, but were absent opposite the doorways. They had been

carefully protected by a 3 inch layer of yellow sand. Above the sand was another mortar bed with the imprint of 9 x 4½ inch bricks. Most of these bricks which were 'Suffolk whites' had been removed before the floor had been raised with brick and rubble fill to the present level. The loose soil opposite the south doorway was excavated and a stone water stoup was found half protruding under the blocking of the doorway. Further exploration of this area revealed a lead pipe which appeared to have been cut when the stoup was inserted (Plate G 2). Tiles, stoup and pipe are described in the finds section (below pp. 213-20).

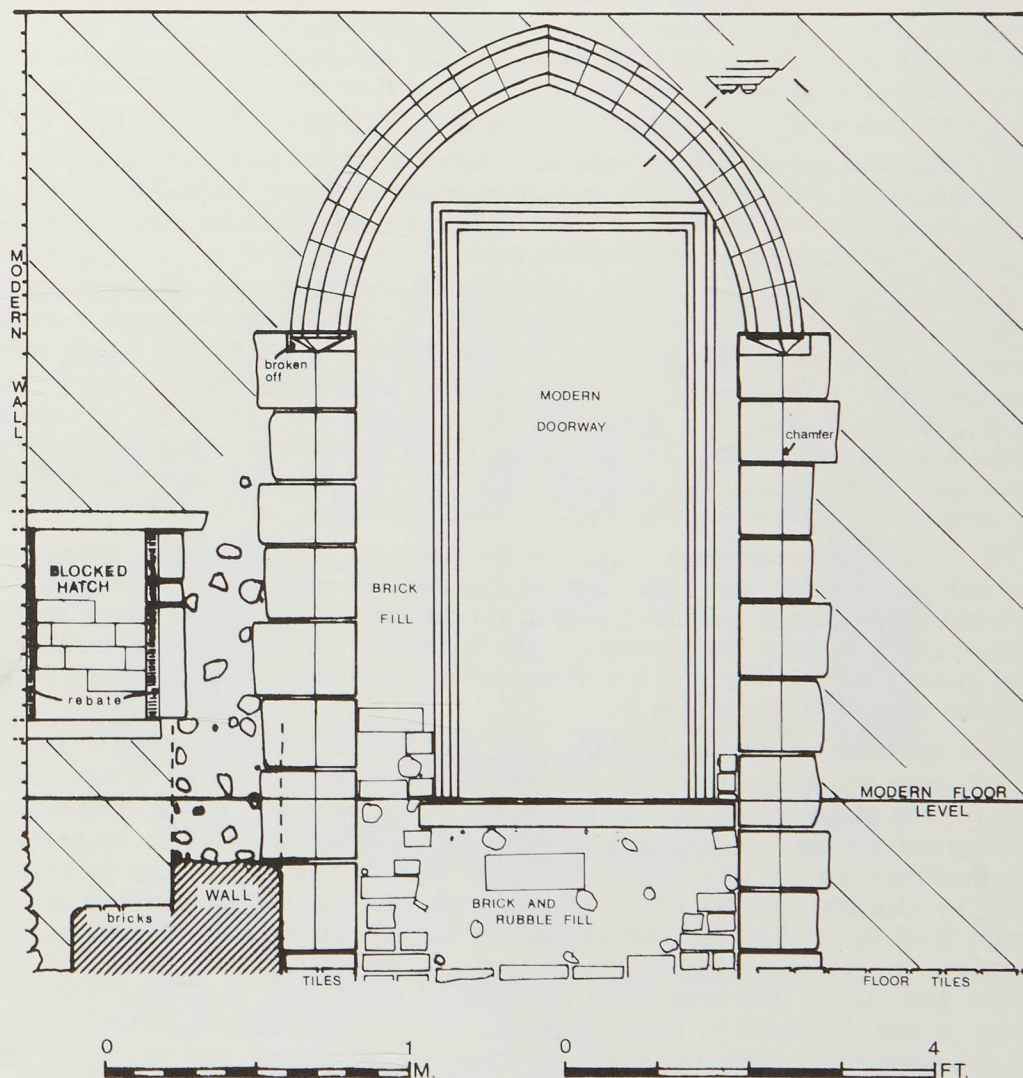


Fig. d.
Elevation of part of east wall in Room 1.

The walls uncovered were of flint and mortar with several layers of white plaster on the inside. They survived to a height of 1ft. above the tiles. The west wall which also contained some pudding stone, was 1ft. 6 ins. thick and straight-jointed onto the existing south wall beside the jamb of the 12th-century arch.

Its other end joined on to the north wall which, for nearly half its length, was a substantial foundation of flintwork 2ft. 6ins. thick. The west end of the north wall ran under the modern brick wall. The east half was 1ft. 3ins. thick and had a step on its north side formed of orange bricks, 9 x 5 x 2ins. and covered with plaster (Fig. d). The foundation of the intersection of the north and west walls extended diagonally across the corner. Small trenches either side of the west wall were dug to a depth of 3ft. below the level of the tiled floor but undisturbed ground was not found and space was too confined for the construction trench for the west wall to be defined. The wall foundations went down about 1ft. and consisted of unknapped flints projecting 2ins. either side. Beneath them were 2-inch thick alternate layers of light mortar and soil. Some of these layers contained fragments of plaster painted with the same Romanesque decoration as that on the south wall of the room but no pottery or other dateable debris was found.

A section cut north-south across the eastern half of the north wall showed that it was demolished when the adjacent modern brick wall was built. The outline of its core could be seen up to about 5ft. high in the east wall (see Fig. d) after the stripping of modern plaster and wall-paper.

The cleaning down of the wall uncovered the outlines of a blocking which, when removed, revealed a hatch 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high by 15ins. wide excluding rebates either side for a door. The hatch had a stone sill and a wooden lintel. Inside it the floor widened to 18ins. and was roughly re-set with glazed tiles, three of them decorated (Fig. f, 1-3). The north side of the hatch was composed of modern bricks and the east of large rounded flints set in mortar and plastered over. For structural reasons these sides were not disturbed. At some date later than the east blocking of the hatch a wooden shelf had been inserted at half height.

Fig. d shows the elevation of part of the east wall in Room 1 after excavation and before the floor was back-filled to the level of the modern door-step. The door-jambes were on 4-inch thick plinths set on a foundation of flint and mortar which extended under the floor tiles into the room. The blocking in the archway is of modern bricks. The arch has 13th-century mouldings re-set on jambs with a chamfer of *c.* 1400 (*i.e.* period 3).

Two small trenches were dug outside Room 1. The first measuring 3ft. by 6ft. by 2ft. deep was across the projected line of the west cloister wall. It was dug to look for the original west wall of the frater, but no wall was found. The second was dug outside the original south doorway and measured 8ft. by 10ft. Its purpose was threefold: to try to establish the floor level in Room 1 before excavation there; to look for evidence of the cloister walk floor; and to look for the cloister arcade. Both the arch of the doorway and the blocking (removed in 1973) appeared to stop one course below the moulded stones projecting from the jambs, the lowest part of the blocking being a course of roughly-set roof tiles. These all rested on soil, followed by rough flints laid on the hard orange bed-rock. Because of gardening there were no stratified layers in this trench and the south end had been disturbed by a one-inch water pipe laid along the cloister in about 1950. All the potsherds were post-medieval or modern. There was no sign of either the floor of the cloister or the arcade (foundations of the latter were later discovered further out – see above, p. 206).

Room 2

A small trench was dug beside the south wall to look for the continuation of the lead pipe found in Room 1. A floor of worn post-medieval bricks, like those

encountered above the tiles in Room 1 lay beneath the soil foundation of the modern floor on a foundation of mixed earth and whitish mortar fragments. Pottery from between the brick and modern floors included Delft-ware and a fragment of an 18th-century tankard. The pipe was located underneath the bricks running diagonally up and into the south wall 1 ft. from the south-east corner. It had a join and slight bend 10ins. from this point. Fragments of early wall plaster were found around the point where the pipe went under the wall, suggesting that the pipe was a later insertion like the arch of the lavatorium (above p. 210). Another small pit or disturbance about 13ins. in diameter beneath the bricks in the area excavated yielded fragments of building debris including black and yellow tiles like those in Room 1 and one decorated one (Fig. f, 3).

Room 3

The floor of this room was sectioned across the centre from east to west and from north to south, except where a Victorian tiled floor lay beside the north wall. The north-south section, here published in simplified form (Fig. e), shows that when the foundations for the modern wooden floor were constructed, earlier archaeological levels were cleared away. The 19th-century bricks for the floor joists rested on a layer of mortar and rubble. Under this was a partially disturbed layer of fine dark brown soil containing a scatter of a few small stones. Two pits were found in it in the south-east quadrant of the room. These contained broken pot-sherds of Thetford ware and small bones of domestic animals (sheep, fowl etc.). The soil layer lay on the natural gravel of the region, a hard reddish gravel with patches of iron pan (Norwich crag). It sloped down from south to north. This downward slope in the hard natural may provide part of the answer to why the north wall of the frater had to be buttressed and re-built so often.

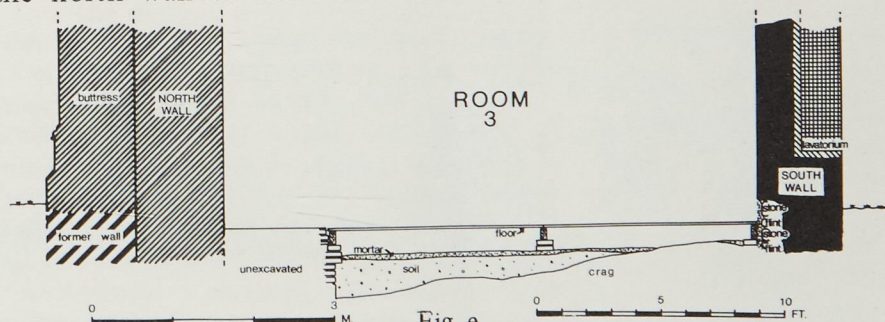


Fig. e.
Section North-South across Room 3.

FINDS

All the finds, both those excavated and those discovered during restoration, are stored at Horsham St. Faith Priory.

Stone

1. Holy water stoup 17ins. high, 22ins. across. Bowl 11ins. deep, 16ins. in diameter. Three sides are plain, four are carved with a plain escutcheon in a 14th-century pattern similar to that at the foot of the north-west buttress. It has a dowel for fixing a lid. Found under the threshold of the south door in Room 1 (Plate G, 2).

The latest pottery (below No. 3) found in the back-fill around the stoup was 17th-century. It presumably came from the priory church and, being a consecrated vessel, was carefully buried rather than thrown away.¹⁻⁶

2. Fragment of a marble shaft 3ft. 7ins. in diameter. From the foundations of the fireplace in Room 3.
3. Four fragments of plain 14th-century hood-moulds. From Room 3, top soil.
4. Two fragments of voussoirs with 14th-century mouldings. From brick and rubble fill in Room 1.

A number of other pieces of moulded stonework was found during repairs to the building, some with 13th century dog-tooth and fillet mouldings similar to those re-built into the Mission Room (see above, p. 204).

Painted Plaster

The most important wall-plaster is in situ and has already been referred to. Only six pieces from an archaeological context are worth mentioning. The mortar adhering to them is fine and sandy.

1. Two fragments, each under an inch across. One has red and black paint; the other black bands on orange. From Room 1, foundation trench of west wall.
2. Four fragments each under 2ins. across:
 - a. pinkish-red paint on white;
 - b. a black stripe between red and yellow;
 - c. bands of red and black;
 - d. a band of yellow between black. From Room 2, pipe trench.

Floor Tiles – by Laurence Keen

The floor tiles recovered during the excavations provide useful information for the county. Details of tiles from other sites are very few and often inadequate; unfortunately the pavement at Clifton House, King's Lynn, which is clearly important in any discussion of the tiles of East Anglia, is not yet published. Past discoveries, such as the pavement from the priory church at Castle Acre¹⁷ are published, but usually without adequate detail. It is hoped that archaeological work now in progress in the county will produce the material on which a more comprehensive survey of the East Anglian tile industries, particularly those in Norfolk, may be based.

Tiles with relief designs are frequently found in East Anglia. The majority of these has designs also found on tiles from the tile-kiln at Bawsey, King's Lynn,¹⁸ where tile production on a large scale catered for a wide area. Other relief tiles are known from Norfolk,¹⁹ and there are links between tiles from Norwich²⁰ and sites such as Oulton²¹ and Flixton St. Andrew,²² which on evidence of other relief tiles in Suffolk, suggest the presence of further tile-kilns.

Tiles decorated with white slip, producing a two-colour tile, also occur in the county but on present evidence these appear to have been manufactured on a much smaller scale than relief tiles. The most important evidence for tiles of this type comes from Clifton House and Castle Acre, both referred to above.

Previous Discoveries from the Site

Salvandy's account of discoveries from the priory refers to floor tiles found in the church.²³ The accompanying drawing (Plate H) illustrates ten tiles but unfortunately the description and illustration are not very helpful. Only one

design illustrated by Salvandy (Fig. f, 1) has been found in recent work. One tile from the priory was exhibited by the Rev. Octavious Mathias on 2nd July 1846 at a meeting of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society, but no illustration was published.²⁴

Recent Finds

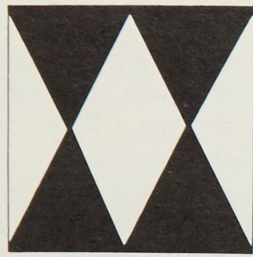
Plain Tiles

An area of tile pavement was found in Room 1 (see p. 210). It was laid with the tiles at 45° to the walls in a simple chequer pattern of yellow and dark green tiles. The tiles are 107mm (4½ins) square and 25mm thick. On the dark-green glazed tiles four – and sometimes five – nail holes are found in the struck surface; these resulted from the tile quarries being fixed onto a nailed board when the sides were trimmed. Other plain tiles were found in Room 2. They are approximately the same size as the tiles found *in situ* but have a very poor body fabric. The poor quality of the fabric makes it difficult to determine whether these plain tiles are imports, as the flaky yellow slip and the nails would at first suggest.²⁵ Thetford Priory has floors made up of plain tiles like these as well as decorated Bawsey tiles. It is quite possible that plain tiles were produced in East Anglia using techniques from the Low Countries, or even were made by immigrants; only detailed scientific examination can resolve this problem.

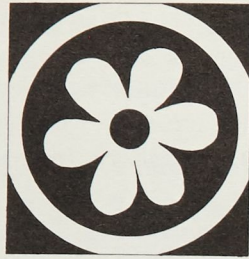
Decorated Tiles (Fig. f)

Ten decorated tiles were found during the conservation work (Fig. f, 4-12) and a further three were located re-set in the hatch in Room 1 (Fig. f, 1-3). With the exception of one tile (no. 13 below) all the tiles were decorated with white clay, giving a two-colour design. Since the tiles are very worn it is not absolutely certain how the designs were produced. None of them can be shown definitely to have been made by the usual inlaying method. In the majority of the tiles the designs are shallow, the white slip uneven, and the surface of the slip often lower than the surrounding tile. A recent discussion by P. J. Drury of the tiles manufactured at Danbury, Essex²⁶ raises considerable doubts about the 'printing' technique and suggests further possible methods of producing two-colour designs which have been tested practically: *stamp-on-slip* – in this method the face of the tile is painted with white slip and the design impressed into the surface. After stamping, the raised parts of the tile are scraped to produce a two-colour design; *slip-over-impression* – slip is poured over the tile which has been stamped, the slip is then allowed to dry and the surface finally scraped, produced tiles like those of the 'Westminster' tiler.²⁷ It is possible that some of the Horsham tiles were produced using one of these methods, but the worn state of the tiles leaves the question open and the lack of comparative material makes discussion difficult. However, designs 2, 10 and 11 are paralleled by tiles produced by the slip-over-impression technique found at Waltham Abbey.²⁸ Design 2 is also paralleled at Campsea Ash, Suffolk, where it was thought to be 'printed', and design 3 is also found there.²⁹ The pavement at Clifton House has designs very similar to 1, 2 and 3, but a detailed comparison has not been made.³⁰ Designs 4, 7, 8 and 11 have been recorded from Ely and the surviving tiles in Prior Crauden's Chapel appear to have been produced by the slip-over-impression method. A 13th-century or early 14th-century date is probable.

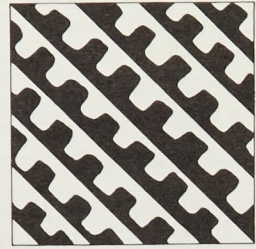
This small group of tiles suggests that the medieval tile industries of Norfolk use a variety of techniques which probably link with the known industries of the adjacent areas. Only further field work and new discoveries will clarify the situation.



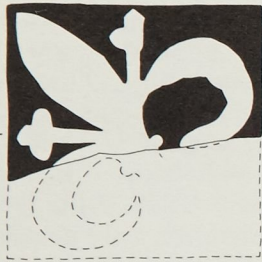
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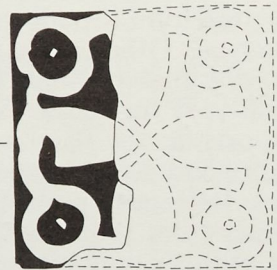
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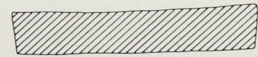
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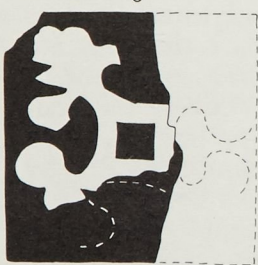
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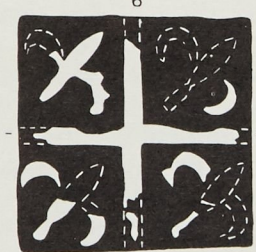
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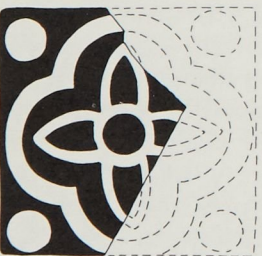
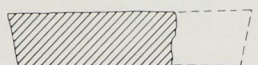
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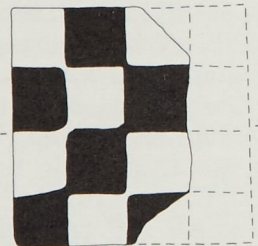
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12

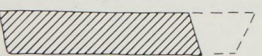


Fig. f.

Floor tiles from excavations and repairs, 1970-72. Scale ¼.

List of Tiles

- (a) *Plain*
1. Black glazed and yellow glazed tiles from surviving floor in Room 1.
 2. Fragment with yellow and brown glaze. From Room 1, beneath mortar bed for tiled floor.
 3. Bottle green glaze 121 x 22mm. From Room 2, post-Dissolution feature.
 4. Yellow glaze, 103 x 28mm with horizontal cut across face for breaking in half. From same feature as No. 3.

In addition to these excavated tiles, there are a few others at the priory re-set presumably at, or after, the Dissolution. Those on the floor of the hatch in Room 1 have already been mentioned. They comprise one yellow and two green tiles, each 114mm square. On the sill of the large north window in Room 3 are 248mm. and 127mm. square tiles. On the second step of the stairs up to the pulpit are 114mm. square tiles.

- (b) *Decorated* 1-3 Found re-set in floor of hatch in Room 1.
 (Fig. f) 4-12 Found by builders during repair work, provenances un-recorded.
- (not illustrated) 13 Decorated in relief with a quarter-circle around a fleur-de-lis. Found re-set in the draw-bar hole of the south doorway of Room 1.
- " 14 Fragment with yellow and brown glaze. From Room 1, foundation trench for west wall.
- " 15 Fragment with same decoration as no.3. From same provenance as plain tile no.3.

Pottery – by Glyn Coppack

The pottery is, with only a few exceptions, of little importance either for its own sake or for its archaeological context. Only 16 sherds are here described and only 2 sherds illustrated out of a total of 55 sherds excavated. The last total is made up of 16 medieval sherds and 39 post-medieval sherds, the former mainly from Room 3, and the latter mainly from Room 1. The total does not include a large quantity of late 19th-century and modern sherds.

Medieval

1. Cooking pot rim and shoulder in a hard, fine, sand-tempered brown fabric with a pale grey core, which can be identified as Thetford ware. The form is typical of the later 11th and early 12th centuries. Fig. g, 1.
- 2-5. Several sherds from the rim and upper wall of a large bowl in a hard, slightly sandy orange fabric with an orange-brown core. Heavy burning has reduced the outer surface and margin of the vessel to dark grey. The vessel is decorated with thumb-pressings on the upper surface and flange of the rim, and with crudely executed wavy-line decoration which is incised into the outer surface of the vessel, and just below the rim within. There is no indication that any part of the vessel was glazed, and the general style of the bowl would suggest an early date. Fig. g, 2, a fragment, 2 x 2½ins. of the base of a similar vessel, having a single piercing, made before firing.

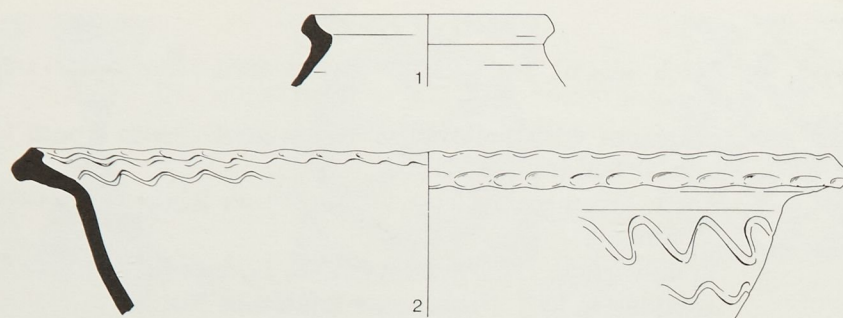


Fig. g.
Pottery. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

These two vessels come from deposits associated with, or slightly earlier, than the construction of the range at the beginning of the 12th century. There is little reason to suppose that either vessel need be earlier than the foundation of the priory in 1105, or much later than this date. They are the earliest finds from the site.

6. Fragment 2 x 2½ins. of the base of a similar vessel, having a single piercing made before firing.
7. Fragment of body and sagging base of cooking pot of grey gritty Thetford ware. From Room 3, top layer.
- 8-9. Rim sherd and thin body sherd of orange-grey Thetford-type ware. From Room 3, top layer.
- 10-11 Rim and neck-herd, fitting, from a jug in Hedingham-type ware. The hard, red-orange fabric is finely sand-tempered, with orange-buff surfaces. The outer surface has vertical rows of applied iron-rich clay pellets below a clear lead glaze. From the back-fill around stoup.

Post-Medieval

1. 8 fragments of a Delft-ware plate with black and light blue floral decoration. English and probably Lambeth ware, *c.* 1700. From Room 1, rubble layer. Similar fragments from other plates were also found.
2. Rim sherds of tankard of 16th century Frecken ware. From Room 1, rubble layer.
3. Fragment of 17th-century brown-glazed Bellarmine jug. From back-fill around water stoup in Room 1.
4. Part of a tankard of brown-glazed Nottingham ware. 18th-century. From Room 2.
5. Rim and handle from a double-handled Dutch slip-ware bowl. The pale orange, slightly sandy fabric and white slip below a clear lead glaze would suggest a north Dutch origin. Such vessels are current throughout the 17th century. This example can be closely compared with a more complete example from Dover.³ ¹ From disturbed trench outside south doorway.

Clay Pipes

Fragments of four late 17th-century tobacco pipes all undecorated were found in later layers; a fifth was found in 1974 in the priory grounds (Fig. h).

1. Bowl, base stamped 'N' on one side, 'S' the other. From Room 3.
2. 4in. length of stem and fragment of bowl. From Room 1.
3. 2¼in. length of stem and part of bowl, the base stamped 'P' on one side, 'S' the other. From Room 2.
4. 2in. length of stem and part of bowl, the base stamped 'P' on one side, 'S' the other. Found with no. 3.
5. 1¾in. length of stem and bowl, the base stamped 'P' one side 'S' the other. Found in 1974.

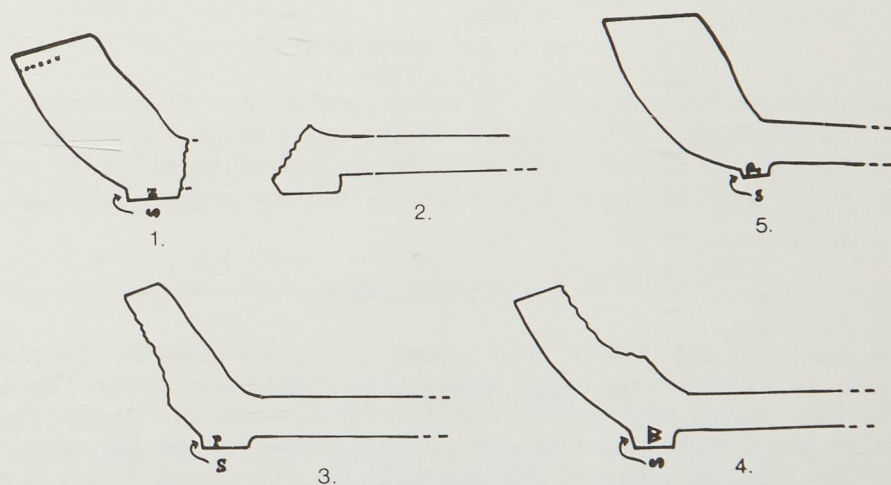


Fig. h.
Clay pipes. Scale ½

Iron

An assortment of ordinary hand-forged builder's nails was found at various levels and is not worth publishing in detail. They ranged from 1 to 3ins. in length. The only other excavated ironwork of note was:

1. Horseshoe, c. 4¼ x 4½ins., and 1¼in. wide, from Room 1, rubble layer.
2. Fragment of strap of bucket or hoop, with hinge and 1-inch nail attached. From Room 1, rubble layer.

Lead

This pipe can be assumed to have run westwards from the lavatorium underground for some 21ft. at least. A short length was sawn off and removed from near where the piscina was found in Room 1. It was pear-shaped in section with a V-shaped seam along the top, and about 2ins. in diameter (Fig. i). After a section of it had been cleaned it was observed that the seam of the pipe was made of a different metal alloy³² and it is suggested that the pipe was formed by bending a strip of lead to form a tube and then joining the edges by setting them

in a mould and pouring along molten lead. This method of manufacture is well-known from Roman times onwards, and pipes of this kind are common on monastic sites. As only one join in the Horsham St. Faith example was found it is not possible to say here in what lengths the pipe was originally made.^{3 3}

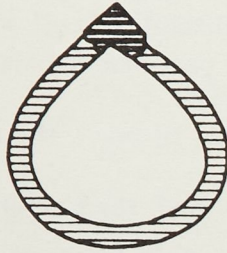


Fig. i.
Section of lead pipe. Scale ½.

Generally, on medieval sites pipes of metal carried clean water to where it was needed, while earthenware pipes carried waste water away. The Horsham pipe, therefore, presumably carried clean water to the lavatorium set in the wall outside. The waste from the lavatorium probably drained into a soakaway in the cloister.

CONCLUSIONS

The architecture and history of Horsham St. Faith's illustrate the plan and development of a normal conventual priory of the Benedictine order. The similarity of the frater range with that of the quasi-sister house at Conches has been noted above; but it is necessary to look no further than Binham for a priory plan of practically identical size and shape, except for the church which is on the more usual north side of the cloister, and the positions of the sacristy and chapter house which are reversed. The frater itself was a ground-floor hall with presumably a dais for the high table at the east end, above which the remarkable wall-paintings must have formed an impressive reredos. This is the only frater in England which survives with a painted reredos. The principal architectural periods at Horsham correlate nicely with the dates derived from historical and archaeological sources which are summarised in the table here following:

	<i>Architecture</i>		<i>History</i>
<i>Building Period</i>			
1 12th cent.	Claustral ranges built of flint and pudding stone. Inside walls of frater with painted ashlar.	1105	Founded by Fitzwalters for 12 monks and a prior.
2 13th cent.	Rebuilding of pulpit. Sedilia arches with semi-dogtooth mouldings. Frater wall-paintings, c.1250-75.	1291	Annual income £78.6.10¼d.

*Architecture (continued)**History (continued)*

<i>Building Period</i>			
3			
14th–15th cent.	Shortening and narrowing of frater. Tiled floor in lobby to west of frater. Lavatorium rebuilt. Refenestration.	1338-45 1390 1401-37	Taxes in arrears and remitted. 'Buildings almost in ruins'; only 8 monks. Denization. Prior Langley (memorial brass)
4	Conversion to house with first floor, fireplaces, refenestration.	1535 1536 1537	Income £162.16.11½d. Dissolution. 4 monks. Granted to Richard Southwell
5	Further conversions. Buttresses with moulded brickwork added to south side.	1598	Bought by Sir Henry Hobart.
6	A farmhouse. Alterations and additions on north-west side.	1846 1924 1970-73	Beginnings of antiquarian interest in priory. Wall-paintings discovered. Restorations and further discoveries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For permission to publish Plates A – C and E I am grateful to Mr. Hallam Ashley and the National Monuments Record, and Plate F to Mr. Jonathan Coad. The plans in Fig. c are based on a survey carried out by Messrs. Purcell, Miller and Tritton, chartered architects, by kind permission of Mr. Miller and the owners of the priory.

Mr. David Sumpster was the architect for the Historic Buildings Council; Mr. M. Rosie the Ministry's area superintendent of works, and Mr. F. Buller of Messrs. Coopers of Calthorpe the foreman in charge of the repairs. I would like to thank the volunteers who helped with the excavations, especially Diana Allen, Stephen Smith and Susan Ware.

I would also like to thank a number of friends and colleagues for help in preparing this report, including Glyn Coppack and Laurence Keen for reports on the pottery and tiles respectively; Messrs. A. P. Baggs, R. Gilyard-Beer, S. E. Rigold and A. B. Whittingham for help with historical and architectural matters. I am particularly grateful to David Sumpster for help with the plans, and the owners of the priory who provided much help and hospitality during, and after, the excavation.

April 1976

¹The legend is told in Dugdale, *Monast. Ang.* III (1846), page 635. For earlier similar miracles of St. Faith see *Liber de Miraculis S. Fidei* in J. Migne *Patrologia Latina* CXLI, col. 127. On Conques and St. Faith see Marcel Aubert, *l'Église de Conques* (Paris, 1939).

²See Gustave Desjardins, *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Conques* (Paris 1879), p. CXV and nos. 497, 516, 519-22. For a list of priors see *Victoria History of the County of Norfolk*, II (1906), p. 348 and D. Knowles

et al., *Heads of Religious Houses* (C.U.P. 1975), p. 104. Ties between Horsham and Conques were maintained at least as late as 1372 when Gregory XI wrote to the Bishop of Norwich commending to him the four monks sent from Conques to Horsham (*Calendar of Papal Registers* (H.M.S.O. 1902), IV, p. 114).

³ 'Expositio Remigii super Focam' now British Museum Royal MS 12, F.IV. Folio 1b is inscribed 'Hic est liber ecclesie sancte Fidis de Horsham'.

⁴ Now Trinity College, Cambridge, Western MS 884. The evidence for saying this work came from Horsham is that it contains a 12th-century chronology which mentions the foundation by Robert and Sybil in 1105 and the death of Robert in 1138. But the four priors it mentions, Isarnus who succeeded Savericus in 1147 and Tancred who succeeded Henry in 1172, are otherwise unknown at Horsham.

⁵ A *Life* is known to have been written by Simon of Walsingham, a monk of Bury St. Edmunds c. 1214. Walsingham is not far from Horsham, so Simon might have borrowed a copy of a *Life* from there. But St. Faith had her own chapel at Bury and elsewhere.

⁶ See D. Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses* (1971), pp. 54 and 68 (where the mother house is wrongly stated as Conches).

⁷ The initials 'R.S.' were found in 1968 scratched in the mud and daub infilling in a room on the first floor of the former frater. See below Period 4.

⁸ 4th ser. tom. III (1878), pp. 1-12, figs. 1-8. The paper is stated to be based on an account by Ballance in the *Norfolk Chronicle & Norwich Gazette*, 23 May 1874, and 'un petit volume orné de gravures, intitulé *Parochial Leaves*'. This latter work I have not been able to find. The confusion between Conques (Aveyron) and St. Foy de Conches which dates back at least to Dugdale is corrected by Walter Rudd in *Norfolk Archaeology* XXIII (1929), p. 68. It is certainly unusual to find a priory dependent on a mother house so far from England or Normandy. Furthermore Conches was connected to Norfolk through the family of another Norman, Roger de Tosny (after whom Saham Tony is named). He granted lands in Norfolk to Conches Abbey and his ancestor of the same name had brought relics of St. Faith from Conques to Conches Abbey which he founded in 1035.

⁹ The lower part of this brass was moved in 1974 to the parish church. The upper part is missing.

¹⁰ On the other hand the *Guide Blue* (1952 edn., p. 258) describes the site as follows: 'à l'extrémité de la rue du Val est située l'ancienne abbaye des Bénédictines, occupée par l'hôpital. Dans la cour à droit, arcades romanes; à gauche, vestiges d'une église gothique avec plusieurs contreforts et arcs-boutants'.

¹¹ See however N. Pevsner, *North-East Norfolk and Norwich* (1962), pp. 172-3. The mouldings are very similar to those on the west front of Binham Priory, dated 1226-1244.

¹² The frater door was noted as blocked-up by Ballance. When it was unblocked in 1972 the iron hinges were found. The draw-bar was on the west side. There were traces of red paint on the jambs.

¹³ But note there was important building in the church in the 13th century. See above, p. 204, and note 8.

¹⁴ In 1971-72 both the crucifixion scene and the scenes of the foundation story were cleaned and conserved by Mrs. Eve Baker and David Perry and now merit a fresh and fuller art-historical study. They are briefly described by Donovan Purcell, who was architect in charge of the restorations, in *Norfolk Archaeology*, XXXV (1974), pp. 469-73 and Pl. I-II. They contain a wealth of pictorial detail of costume, armour, architecture etc. Special mention must be made of the sail with the earliest known reef-points on the boat in which the founders crossed the channel and the early representation of a wheelbarrow in the priory building scene. Wheelbarrows were a Chinese invention not known in Europe before the 13th century (see Singer, Holmyard, Hall & Williams, eds. *History of Technology*, II, (Oxford 1956), p. 770.)

¹⁵ The square-headed windows are closely paralleled by those of 1380 in the Great Hospital, Norwich.

¹⁶ Another consecrated vessel, the octagonal Norman font, probably from the church rather than the priory, was 'in existence in the parish, having been used as a water trough for nearly a century'. (Ballance, *op. cit.* in note 8 above).

¹⁷ W. H. St. John Hope, 'Castle Acre Priory', *Norfolk Archaeology*, XII (1895), p. 119 and pl. I.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Eames, 'The products of a medieval tile kiln at Bawsey, King's Lynn', *Antiq. Journal* XXXV (1955), pp. 162-81. For a distribution map of these tiles see Laurence Keen, 'Medieval Floortiles from Campsea Ash Priory', *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, XXXII (1971), pp. 149-50 and Fig. 41.

¹⁹ Keen, *op. cit.*

²⁰ *Norfolk Archaeology*, I (1847), pp. 368-9.

²¹ Museum of Arch. & Eth., Cambridge.

²² S.E. West, 'A medieval floor-tile from Flixton', *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, XXXII (1971), 201 and Fig. 49.

²³ *Op. cit.* in note 8 above, p. 6.

²⁴ *Norfolk Archaeology*, I (1847), p. 368.

²⁵ Keen, *op. cit.* pp. 147-8.

²⁶ P. J. Drury and G. D. Pratt, 'A 13th and 14th-century tile factory at Danbury, Essex', *Med. Arch.*, XIX (1975), pp. 92-164, esp. 139-140.

²⁷ Laurence Keen, 'Medieval floor-tiles of the "Westminster" tiler at Bengoe, Hertfordshire'. *Herts. Arch.*, 3 (1973), p. 90-93.

²⁸ Waltham Abbey, 463, 473 and 475. I am grateful to Paul Drury for discussing various points of detail and for allowing reference to these tiles.

²⁹ Keen, *op. cit.* in note 18, Fig. 39, 13 and Fig. 40, 15.

³⁰ V. Parker, *The Making of King's Lynn* (1971), p. 89 and Pl. 21A.

³¹ See D. C. Mynard, 'A group of post-medieval pottery from Dover Castle', *Post-Med. Arch.*, III (1969), pp. 31-46, esp. Fig. 12, 19 and p. 40.

³²Quantative analyses of the different alloys carried out by milliprobe in 1971 did not show significant differences in the metals, but differential oxidation of the cleaned surfaces over the last 5 years shows clearly the extent of the alloy in the seam.

³³Lengths of up to 8ft. 8in. have come from Rievaulx Abbey. For East Anglian examples see St. Albans Abbey (*Trans. St. Albans & Herts. Arch. Soc.*, (1926), p. 138 and Pl. IV) and Ely Cathedral (*Proc. Camb., Soc. Antiq.*, LX (1967), p. 86). For the method of manufacture see R. F. Tylcote *Metallurgy in Archaeology* (1962), p. 95, Fig. 20.

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